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And They Were There

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And They Were There

**OPTIMISM IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY:
THE ST. LOUIS ACQUISITIONS '90 CONFERENCE**

by **Richard Jasper** (Emory University)

Despite the recent dreadful news regarding out of sight increases in serials prices for 1990-91, an encouraging sense of optimism prevailed at the Acquisitions '90 Conference on Acquisitions, Budgets, and Collections, held May 15-17 at St. Louis' Union Station. More than 200 librarians, publishers and vendor representatives attended the conference, sponsored by Genaway & Associates, Inc. The conference drew attendees from all over the United States and Canada, although about half the participants were from the Midwest.

Unlike similar past conferences, this first St. Louis conference was not dominated by a single issue. Conference participants had relatively little to say about recent

announcements by subscription agents and periodical publishers indicating average price hikes of more than 20% for European and scientific journals.

Instead, they exhibited a mostly optimistic, "can do" spirit during the plenary and concurrent sessions (of which there were altogether 12 — four each dealing separately with acquisitions, budgets, and collections); their thinking seemed to be a combination of "despite the pain, we know what we're doing" and "technology will save the day." Even so, some conference members suggested that optimism isn't everything and that we may be "whistling in the dark, trying to keep the bogeyman away."

In some ways, the spirit of the

conference reflected its environment. Union Station, once the busiest railway terminal in the United States, is now a combination hotel, conference center, shopping mall, and entertainment complex. There was NO need to leave its environs in search of those other usual conference activities, wining/dining and shopping — and just as well! St. Louis' weather was absolutely horrendous Tuesday and Wednesday, with many incoming flights delayed thanks to golfball sized hail and 60 mph gusts reported at Lambert International Airport Tuesday evening. We frolicked in the Station, while outside St. Louis was washing away. Thursday, however, turned into a lovely, if somewhat windy, Midwestern spring day.

We would like to thank the following companies for their generous contributions!

**The Book House
Ambassador Book Service**

Thanks go as well to Ballen Booksellers for mailing some issues of *Against the Grain*.

The Plenary Sessions

In the plenary sessions, keynote speaker John Berry, editor-in-chief of *Library Journal*, set the tone by congratulating acquisitions and collection management librarians on their accomplishments in acquiring and providing access to information, but he warned against letting "market forces" determine libraries' collecting patterns. Information, he asserted, is not a commodity and should not be treated as such. Tendencies to acquire only those materials in heaviest demand, or those whose users are most influential, is likely to result in a society of information "haves and have nots," to the detriment of all.

Against Berry's backdrop of "market forces," Becky Lenzini of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (CARL) suggested a brave new world of

powerful information technology and intensive cooperative resource sharing. Libraries' collective buying power is enormous, Lenzini maintained. In conjunction with ever more powerful technologies for information access and document delivery, libraries should be able to cheerfully abandon their efforts to collect comprehensively and instead focus on information access. Lenzini described the access systems — from BITNET to the proposed National Research and Education Network (NREN) — already in place and those being developed.

Lenzini's faith in technology was an apt complement to expressions of the growing faith acquisitions and collection management librarians now have in themselves. As Program Chair Katina Strauch (College of Charleston) observed, "we're the ones" college and university administrators are turning to for

an understanding of what is happening in the world of publishing and why those changes are having a negative impact on our materials budgets. In coping with the serials crisis we have become savvier, better-informed, and more confident consumers. Karen Schmidt echoed these sentiments by pointing out that acquisitions as a discipline within librarianship is coming into its own; the body of practice and theory relating to the acquisitions of materials is becoming more recognized, more disseminated, and more respected. As for whether there will continue to be a place for acquisitions and collection managers in a resource sharing world, consensus was that our role likely would expand, if anything. With the increasing utilization of advanced information technologies, libraries more and more will need an individual

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Samuel Lazerow Fellowship for Research in Acquisitions or Technical Services

Purpose: To foster advances in acquisitions or technical services in an academic or research library by providing librarians a fellowship for research, travel, or writing in those fields. Research projects in collection development or the compilation of bibliographies will not be supported by this fellowship.

Donor: The Institute for Scientific Information funds the fellowship, which consists of a \$1,000 cash award and a citation, in memory of one of their senior vice-presidents who had a distinguished career in library and information science, and who held high-level posts in each of the three national libraries of the U. S. - National Library of Agriculture, National Library of Medicine, and the Library of Congress.

Criteria: The proposals will be judged with an emphasis on the following:

1. Potential significance of the project to acquisitions or technical services work.
2. Originality and creativity.
3. Clarity and completeness of the proposal.
4. Evidence of an interest in scholarship, such as a previous publication record.

Submission procedures: Brief proposals (five pages or less, double-spaced) should be sent to the ACRL office and include the following: Description of research, travel or writing project, schedule of project, estimate of expenses. (Examples: professional travel, computer time, photocopying, typing), and current curriculum vita. *Recipients of the fellowship will be asked to submit a brief report of the results of their research.*

Deadline: December 1, 1990.

Previous Recipients:: 1983 Denise Bedford, 1985 Anne L. Highsmith, 1987 Margaret Johnson, 1988 Carol Kelley, 1989 Robert H. Burger, 1990 Terence K. Huwe

Association of College and Research Libraries A Division of the American Library Association

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FYI

CALL FOR PAPERS CALL FOR WORKSHOPS CALL FOR DISCUSSION GROUP LEADERS

The North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG), an organization committed to serving the interests of all members of the serials information chain, will hold its sixth annual conference from June 14-17, 1991, at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas. NASIG's annual conference provides a forum in which serials librarians, publishers, vendors, educators, binders, systems developers, and other specialists exchange views, present new ideas, and discuss matters of current interest. The proceedings are published and distributed to a wide audience.

This is a call for PAPERS treating any aspect of serials activities such as administration, acquisitions, cataloging, automation, binding, budgeting, union listing, publishing, and future developments. Topics addressing interrelationships between the various NASIG constituencies are of special interest, as are presentations on new developments and new paradigms for the dissemination and control of the serials literature.

This is also a call for abstracts from individuals interested in leading a WORKSHOP at the conference. Workshops are sessions designed to develop ideas and techniques for managing any aspect of serials work. Related to workshops, NASIG is also calling for DISCUSSION GROUP topics and leaders to stimulate lively exchanges, particularly about links between librarians, publishers, and vendors.

Submission from all members of NASIG and the serials community are welcome. Topics and speaker suggestions from the information community at large are also welcome. Titles and abstracts, to a maximum of 100 words, must be submitted by October 1st to:

Teresa Malinowski
NASIG Secretary
Library
California State University, Fullerton
PO Box 4150
Fullerton CA 92634-4150
Phone: 714-773-3713 FAX: 714-449-7135

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experienced in dealing with the outside world; vendor relations, especially in the form of contract negotiations, will take on added significance.

The Concurrent Sessions

The welter of concurrent sessions could easily have overwhelmed attendees' ability to absorb information, not to mention their patience. About 30 papers were presented altogether, anywhere from two to four papers at each of the morning and afternoon, Wednesday and Thursday sessions on the separate topics of acquisitions, budgets, and collections. Fragmentation could have occurred easily, but didn't thanks largely to a relatively high degree of overlap.

It was good overlap! Attendees reported being pleased that the separate sessions addressed many of the same issues from varying perspectives. They indicated it was possible to get a feel for the issues being addressed, without having to attend every session. Also, there were many fresh perspectives from relative newcomers.

Organizational, workflow and conceptual issues tended to dominate the papers, providing a very refreshing and insightful dose of practicality. Some examples of these "how to" papers included:

— "How to" create separate collection development and acquisitions units out of a single order department.

— "How to" make dual role reference/collection management librarians happier and more productive.

— “How to” use a collection assessment project to win faculty support of a serials cancellation project and, furthermore, educate faculty as to the need for balance and restraint in the area of serials.

— “How to” find information on what publishers, especially serials publishers, are doing and why.

— Considerations of “how to” use and evaluate Out of Print/Antiquarian and firm order vendors.

And lest you feel any remorse at not having attended the conference, Genaway & Associates are planning a full-blown proceedings. Contact them for further information:

Genaway & Associates, Inc.; 530 West Regency Circle; P.O. Box 477; Canfield, Ohio 44406. Phone (215)533-2194.

= BIT BY BIT =

by **Joyce Ogburn** (Penn State University) and **Roy Heinz** (Washington Research Library Consortium)

This is a new column which will address technical issues including networking, consortia activities, electronic resources, and access. We welcome contributions. Please send your ideas, comments, and suggestions to either:

Joyce Ogburn, Acquisitions, Pattee Library, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802 (814) 865-1858

Roy Heinz, Systems Analyst, Washington Research Library Consortium, 4207 Forbes Blvd., Lanham, Maryland 20706 (301) 731-1000

This column is on **EDUCOM - The Electronic Connection** for

Even so...

Despite the optimism, some nagging doubts had begun to creep in before the final plenary session wrapped up late Thursday afternoon. There were two of these:

First there was the sense that we may be “whistling in the dark” in following Becky Lenzini’s lead and putting our hope in “collective buying power” and powerful information access/document delivery technology. For the individual erosion in buying power to be adequately overcome, effective coordinated collection management and resource sharing must occur at the regional AND national levels. And while CARL may yet provide a model for the former, the latter has never truly succeeded for a host of reasons.

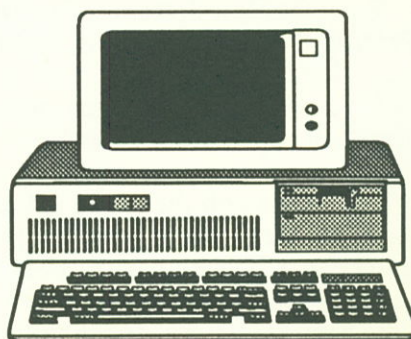
Second, John Berry’s rallying cry to “resist market forces” was correct, but also could become misleading. Libraries cannot, as Berry correctly insisted, allow their collection building activities to be

totally market driven—American society surely will suffer as a result. Going on to say, however, that information is not a “commodity” may cut off a serious debate which has yet to materialize but which desperately needs to occur, namely: Did the United States in the Reagan years make a mistake in de-subsidizing “commodities” like information and housing, seriously eroding their general affordability and resulting in greater gaps between the haves and the have nots? What if even our “collective buying power” is unequal to our collective goal of acquiring, maintaining, and making accessible the human record?

Questions such as these may make for interesting discussion at the next Genaway Conference—and given the success of the first conference, there is every reason to believe we will have future opportunities for discussion and debate. 🐘

Higher Education

Academic librarians support the higher education community in a variety of ways, many of which involve electronic resources, networks, or datafiles. To better



serve this community, librarians have expanded their professional concerns and associations to include groups outside of librarianship. One such group is EDUCOM.

EDUCOM is a consortium of institutions and businesses concerned with educational

computing and technology. This non-profit consortium comprises approximately 600 members committed to the use and management of information technology in higher education. Founded in 1964 at the University of Michigan by five medical school deans, EDUCOM was intended to foster the sharing of computing and technical expertise among medical schools. In 1965 EDUCOM’s charter was broadened to encompass all institutions of higher education. Last fall EDUCOM celebrated 25 years of service to higher education in managing technology to assist the education and research process.

Attendees at EDUCOM meetings include teaching faculty, librarians, administrators, directors of computing centers, and others who serve higher education information needs. Among the interests of EDUCOM’s

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